

Parenting Imperatives

Stay Connected to your kids. This recommendation to stay connected to your kids has always been an imperative. The kids who get into trouble or show risky behaviors are usually those who are living in a disconnected world from their parents. This is often because parents are busy with their own schedules and/or kids have a private life going on. Many parents allow their teens to do what they want as long as they have good grades. But we've learned that achievement and financial success as sole life goals, does not lead to a fulfilled life. The rates of youth depression and anxiety, as well suicide attempts are elevated in higher socio-economic areas. The goal of achievement needs to be balanced with the development of character in our kids.

To stay connected to our kids, we may need to examine and possibly adjust our parenting style. How is your child/teen doing? Are they coping ok with their school expectations? Are they okay with their social life? Do they have friends they can trust? Are they friendly to other kids? Would they be welcoming to a new students that just moved into the area?

What is their confidence level?

What is their sense of having a meaningful life? How are their extracurricular activities? Do they have one or two? Do they have too many?

Extracurricular activities should be tied to what they are good at and like to do; competency leads to confidence

At Freedom4U we have a service leadership program where teens can identify and lead a group towards a service activity of their passion and interest. Students are provided with an opportunity to grow in leadership skills communication, organization and team building.

Together time. It can't be stated enough regarding the value of a parent and child/teen having time together. Find a common activity to do together, something that bonds you together. Eat dinners together as often as you can. The result of valued time together will be the creation in your child of a reality; that they are safe, confident, protected and valued. That they matter. These messages can positively contradict other cultural messages they might receive, that; they 'aren't enough.'

Role Model

I'm sure you've heard the expression; practice what you preach. Another way to say that might be; live what you teach.

Living a life with integrity, honesty, authenticity and a commitment to doing your best. Balancing stress with times of relaxation and fun.

Whether we like it or not, kids follow what we do, not what we say.

Parents who use alcohol, marijuana or other substances to cope with stress, relax or check out can't expect their kids not to do likewise.

When I took our puppy to dog training, I thought I would watch the trainer teach my dog to behave appropriately. I was surprised that I was the focus of the training.! Parenting strategies are similar.

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The better a parent can manage their mind, emotions and behavior then the better their kid will be able to also.

Therefore, we have to manage our life with the goal of balance.

Freedom4U and Hearts Respond are hosting Point Fermin Day, a Family Fun Day to benefit economically disadvantaged children in the LA Harbor area. You can help these kids by attending this event and being a supporter. For more information check out the websites below.

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